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Kesiraja and his approach to Kannada case system

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Introductoin

Kannada is one of the predominant Dravidian languages mainly spoken in Karnataka as well as by linguistic minorities in the adjoining states. Kannada is also one of the scheduled languages of India and the official as well as the administrative language of the state of Karnataka. Kannada enjoys a rich treasure of literature which flourished from 6th century though there are claims about its antiquity taking Kannada language and literature to some more centuries behind on the basis of inscriptions. As a Dravidian language, Kannada is not genetically related to Sanskrit or any other Indo-Aryan language though it owes a lot to Sanskrit for its rich body of vocabulary and literature.

Kesiraja's *Śabdamañidarpaṇa* is considered to be a wholesome and systematic grammatical treatise on Kannada language. In fact, *Kavirājamārga* considered to be the most outstanding work on alaṅkāra, of the ninth century included some portions pertaining to Kannada grammar. Kesiraja had other two works before him *Kāvyaśālōkana* and *Karṇāṭakabhāṣābhūṣaṇa* authored by Nagavarma II belonging to the first half of the 12th century.

Śabdamañidarpaṇa which could be termed as 'Jewel-mirror of Grammar' was penned by Kesiraja in 1260 AD. There are several instances in his work to show that he was a follower of Jainism. This is an authentic and comprehensive work on Kannada grammar. Kesiraja has used *kanda* metre in his *sutras* which are followed by *vrittis* being an illustrative commentary by the author himself. In the very beginning of his work after benediction he remembers scholars and writers like Gajaga, Gunanandi, Manasija, Asaga, Candrabhatta, Gunavarma, Srivijaya, Ponna, Pampa, Sujanōttamsa from whom he borrowed live examples to justify the purport of his *sutras* (stanza 5). The author says that as his composition had to follow the rules of prosody, it was inevitable to shift the position of the natural order of words in his composition and hence he wrote a *vritti* or illustrative commentary to facilitate his readers.¹ It seems the author had a passion for grammar and he considers grammar to be a right vehicle to lead one to salvation. He says that "grammar bestows upon a person a control over words and this control leads one to the nuance of its meaning; it is this meaning that establishes one at philosophical level which eventually paves way to salvation. Hence, the ultimate gain for scholars would be salvation."²

Kesiraja divides his text into eight *prakaranas* or chapters :

1. *Sandhi prakarana*
2. *Nama prakarana*
3. *Samasa prakarana*
4. *Taddhita prakarana*
5. *Akhyata prakarana*
6. *Dhatu prakarana*
7. *Apabramsha prakarana*
8. *Avyaya prakarana*

Under *namaprakarana*, Kesiraja deals with *linga* or nominal themes, *vibhakti* or case endings, *sarvanama* or pronouns, and *akshara parinama* or effects of *aksharas* and *varnas*.

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¹ Śabdamañidarpaṇa - Kesiraja (Sutra 6)

² Śabdamañidarpaṇa - Kesiraja (Sutra11)

As far as *vibhaktis* are concerned, Kesiraja follows his predecessor Nagavarma II in his *Bhashabhushana*³ and *Sabdasmriti*.⁴

According to Kesiraja, when we take into account nominative case, nominative singular words ending with *-a* will have a bindu or 'm' (eg. *vedavidam, parahitam, purohitam*); for words which do not end in *-a*, the nominative case-marker gets attached, but gets hidden (eg. *puli, karadi, balli*); and for masculine words which get velar case markers, a 'n'kara or a sound 'n' gets into. For instance, *ava + im = avanim, ava + n + am = avanam*)⁵.

The grammarian observes that in accusative case or *dvitiya vibhakti*, for neuter genders ending with *-a, -m* and *-n* come as *āgama* or insertion (eg. *bettamam, ghattamam, nelanam, bilanam*). For Sanskrit nominal bases, 'm' itself is inserted (eg. *kulamam, balamam, chalamam*).⁶ In *tritiya vibhakti* or instrumental case, according to the author, *-im, -indam, -inde* come as case markers. (eg. *talīyīm, vāhālyīm, kramade, nayade, bhayade*). The author further deliberates over various other circumstances in which instrumental case comes in.⁷

For *caturthi vibhakti* or dative case, *-ge* comes as a case marker for masculine words ending with *-a* (eg. *arasaṅge, ātaṅge*). In case of neuter genders there will be often a choice to have a duplication of the case marker (eg. *banake-banakke, polake-polakke*).⁸

For *pancami vibhakti* or ablative case, the author observes that the case marker *-at* usually appears as *-attanim* (eg. *kereyattanīm, naṅṅarattanīm*).⁹ It is interesting to note that there is hardly any ablative case in Kannada and the situation is managed by the instrumental case. *'-attanim'* is not just a case-marker, but it is an independent word by itself, like *'eḍeyinda'* or *'kaḍeyinda'* in modern Kannada.¹⁰

'-a-' is the widely used marker for *ṣaṣṭhi vibhakti* or the possessive case (also known as the genitive case). The author says that sometimes people elongate this *'-a'* into *'-aa'* (*ā*). This elongation is generally employed when the situation involves emotion or anguish in expression. For example, *mṛḍhana* (meaning belonging to Lord Siva) is also used as *mṛḍhanā*. The author further gives examples for some other variations of the genitive case markers.

The locative case in old Kannada uses, according to Kesiraja, forms - *'oḷ'*, *'alli'* as case markers. For example, *koḷadoḷ* (in the pond) *banadoḷ* (in the forest) *mūḍhal, tenkal, paḍuval, baḍagal, ittal, uttal* are some of the words used to denote directions.¹¹ Kannada *sambhodana vibhakti* or the vocative or denominative case is used to address somebody. Normally, as in Sanskrit, nominal bases ending in vowels become devoid of the so called case-marker for the nominative *'-am'* (*'-u'* in modern Kannada) which is itself optional in the *prathama vibhakti*.

After this, Kesiraja deals with *kārakas* in detail. In stanza 126 onwards, he discusses about *Karmakaraka* presuming the role of *karṭṛkāraka* or the nominative case. He says that the desire of *karṭṛ* or the doer is *karma* or action. He classifies *karmakaraka* into five groups viz., *karma, nirvartya, vikārya, prāpya* and *vaiṣayika* and gives several examples for these

varieties. He also says that the usage of *karma karaka* or the accusative case employing *dvitiya vibhakti* which implies *iṣṭa* (desire), *aniṣṭa* (no-desire), *kāla* (time) and *adhva* (treading a path).¹² Next he says that *sampradhana* or the dative case which makes use of the *caturthi vibhakti*. He classifies its usage into *sampradāna* (giving, bestowing), *ruḥi* (taste), *īrṣye* (envy), *matsara* (jealousy), *hita* (good) and *bhīti* (fear).¹³

The author next deals with ablative case *apādānakaraka* and says that *pañcamī vibhakti* would be the case marker used here. He assigns situations like *apādāna* (getting detached from something), *bhaya* (fear), *svīkāra* (acceptance), *iṣṭa* (desire), *aniṣṭa* (no-desire), *hētu* (reason), *udaya* (birth) and *perme* (honour) where *pañcamī* is employed.¹⁴

For assigning any relation, the sixth case or *ṣaṣṭhi vibhakti* is generally employed and the author says that *sambandhadolaṃṣṭu ṣaṣṭhige yōgam*. And this relation is severally classified into *svāmīsambandha* (relation with the master), *kulasambandha* (relation with clan or community), *jāṭīsambandha* (relation with caste or race), *avayava sambandha* (organic relation), *lakṣaṇa sambandha* (characteristic relation), *sannidhāna sambandha* (neighbourhood relation), *sansparśa sambandha* (tactile relation) and *sambandha sambandha* (relation with respect to relation).¹⁵ He has substantiated his classification on the basis of several examples.

For locative case which makes use of the *saptami vibhakti* the author says *āvudādhāramadu adhikaraṇam*, to assign any support *adhikarana* comes into play.¹⁶ Kesiraja provides several instances where *adhikarana* is used - *adhikaraṇa* (physical support), *guṇa* (quality), *kriyā* (action), *viṣaya* (location), *vyāpaka* (expanse), *vyavahāra* (transaction), *kāla* (season) and *satyārtha* (actuality).¹⁷

Kesiraja deals further about the different types of usages of Kannada case-markers in some ten following stanzas. It is interesting to note his observations on *vibhakti pallata* or inter-change or the shift of the roles of case-markers. This shift throws light upon the flexibility of the use of Kannada case-markers.¹⁸ Even the words of the renowned linguist Caldwell may be quoted here : "Every past position annexed to a noun constitutes properly speaking a new case and therefore the number of such depends upon the requirements of the speaker and the different shades of meaning he wishes to express."¹⁹

Not differing much from his predecessors Kesiraja also affirms that there are eight *vibhaktis* for nominal bases and each *vibhakti* or case has its own *pratyaya* or case-marker.²⁰ Some of the modern scholars do not totally contribute to the theories put forth by old grammarians. They argue that (i) there is no *pancami vibhakti* or ablative case in Kannada. (ii) there is no independent case marker for *prathama vibhakti* or nominative case. *Prakrithi* or the nominal base itself functions as the case marker. Other case markers attach themselves to this nominal base which is otherwise presumed to have the nominative case embedded with it.

It is argued by the modern grammarians that *pancami* or ablative is not at all used in the language of the common man

³ Bhashabhushana-Nagavarma II (Sutra 39)

⁴ Śabdasmriti - Nagavarma (Sutra 15)

⁵ Śabdamaṇidarpaṇa - Kesiraja (Sutra 104)

⁶ Śabdamaṇidarpaṇa - Kesiraja (Sutra 105)

⁷ Ibid (Sutra 106)

⁸ Ibid (Sutra 112)

⁹ Ibid (Sutra 115)

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Kesirajaviracita Śabdamaṇidarpanam Ed. By T.Shama Rao and H.N.Nanjegowda 1975 p.153

¹² Ibid. p.167

¹³ Śabdamaṇidarpaṇa - Kesiraja (Sutra 129)

¹⁴ Ibid (Sutra 131)

¹⁵ Ibid (Sutra 132)

¹⁶ Ibid (Sutra 133)

¹⁷ Kesirajaviracita Śabdamaṇidarpanam Ed. By T.Shama Rao and H.N.Nanjegowda 1975 p.172

¹⁸ Ibid p.177

¹⁹ Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages - Caldwell p.255

²⁰ Kannada Kaipidi - Ed.B.M.Srikantiah and Others p.358

in Kannada. The case marker used for the instrumental case itself is employed for the so called ablative case. Even literary texts do not make use of the ablative, which has been comfortably managed by the instrumental. Moreover, *pancami* in Kannada does not have any distinct case marker. Besides, instrumental case markers, *-dese*, *-kade* are some external markers are used to denote *pancami* or ablative, for instance, *āneya deseiyinda*, *simhada kaḍeyinda* (because of the elephant, from the lion). It is said that as earlier Kannada grammars were based on their Sanskrit counterparts, grammarians accommodated for an ablative case in Kannada too.

We also come across discussions about the nature of the Kannada vibhaktis or case-markers whether they are independent words or not. Even scholars like Caldwell are of the opinion that they must have been independent words earlier which have assumed the form of case-markers in due course of time. Case-markers for Kannada locative case are illustrated here to substantiate this.²¹

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²¹ Kannada Kaipidi Ed.B.M.Srikantiah and Others p.362